

Capitol Views**Amerasia Papers:  
A Lesson Lost**

BY WILLARD EDWARDS

WASHINGTON, March 13 —Twenty years ago, every American newspaper and not a few overseas would have given headlines and columns of space to a report entitled, "The Amerasia Papers: A Clew to the Catastrophe of China."

But its release a month ago by the Senate internal security subcommittee scarcely rippled the stream of public consciousness. It may bulk large in future histories of the post-war period but the press-TV media in February, 1970, deemed it worthy only of perfunctory mention.



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In a period when tales of espionage and courtroom dramas are often best-sellers, a narrative combining the elements of both was largely ignored. Few fictional efforts can equal the gripping analysis of the Amerasia case by Dr. Anthony Kubek, chairman of the history department, University of Dallas, who served as a subcommittee consultant.

Why this apathy? A partial explanation may be found in the huge size of the report which ran to two volumes, totaling 2,000 pages. Reporters, editors, and commentators may have been reluctant to digest the contents, and eagerly accepted the foreword's misleading notation that the publication was primarily of value to historians as a sourcebook.

A MORE POWERFUL INFLUENCE, it developed, was the impression of many observers that this was a rehash of ancient history. It was being republished, they speculated, to influence the Nixon administration against warming up relations with Communist China.

The New York Times called it a revival of an almost-forgotten controversy from the McCarthy era and quoted unnamed Capitol hill sources as hinting that the report was intended to "cast doubt on the wisdom of the Nixon administration's attempts at a dialog with Communist China."

Whatever the subcommittee's motivation, the report contained much that was new. Hundreds of top-secret documents and secret testimony were published for the first time. Moreover, Kubek's brilliant and documented study shed illuminating light on the historical impact of this hitherto hidden evidence.

THE AMERASIA CASE remains an astounding example of wholesale espionage with an incredible courtroom climax. Amerasia, a small New York magazine run by men with communist sympathies, was raided by FBI and OSS agents on June 6, 1945. They found more than 600 originals and copies of secret reports from government agencies, including the White House.

Six persons were arrested. Hundreds of additional secret documents were found in their possession. All were charged with violation of the espionage act. There was no question as to their guilt. On Sept. 29, less than four months later, during a brief hearing before a federal judge in Washington, Philip Jaffee, the editor, was fined \$2,500, which he paid on the spot. Another defendant was fined \$500. The rest were freed.

Few can quarrel with Kubek's conclusion: When we helped the Communists to win China, we made Korea and Viet Nam inevitable. An honest prosecution of the Amerasia case in 1945, plus disclosure at that time of how policy was subverted, might have averted the slaughter in southeast Asia which continues to this day.